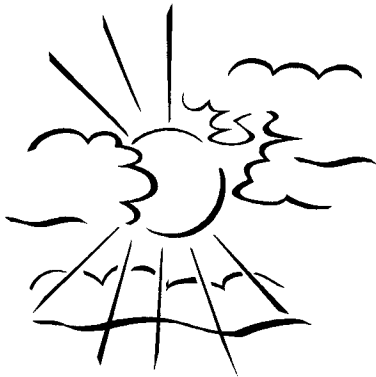


***Department
of
Human
Services***

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**Articles in Today's Clips
Thursday, December 1, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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MIRS
November 30, 2005

Panel Moves Welfare Reform Bills

This evening, the House Family and Children Services Committee reported out a package of Welfare reform bills that proponents claim would get able-bodied individuals back to work while continuing to protect those with disabilities.

The package includes HB 5438, HB 5439, HB 5440, HB 5441, HB 5442, HB 5443, HB 5444, HB 5445, HB 5446 and HB 4121. Similar measures moved Tuesday in the Senate (See *Welfare Amendments Move*, 11/29/05).

Like the Senate measures, the House legislation would provide improved education services early on, provide individualized plans, and provide a two-track system that separates recipients who do not have a future in the workforce from those who are able-bodied and could work.

The only major differences between the House and Senate legislation appears to be that the House package includes a 50 percent earning disregard and the Senate package would set tighter limits on its education component.

Arguably the key issue in the package is a 48-month cap (or limit) on benefits for able-bodied recipients. There would be certain exceptions to the limit. The Senate legislation also included the 48-month cap, an idea borrowed from the House version.

Earlier this week, Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** came out in favor of the 48-month limit. Since then she has made a more-qualified endorsement of the idea, saying she favors the cap with certain exceptions.

Many observers are now considering the Governor's position on the limit to be a moving target. That appeared to be the case Wednesday evening with committee Democrats, all of which abstained on votes to report out the various bills from the package.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Pro-tem Jerry **KOOIMAN** (R-Grand Rapids), one of the main architects of the legislation, acted as if the Governor's position was perfectly clear to him.

"I'm really optimistic about doing this legislation, now that we've heard that the Governor favors the 48-month limit," Kooiman told *MIRS* this afternoon. "I thought that was going to be a huge issue."

Under the House legislation, the 48-month clock would stop ticking if the unemployment rate in the metropolitan area involved rose to 10 percent or above.

The bills also include "three strikes and you're out" language that would eliminate recipients from the program for repeated noncompliance.

An aspect of the legislation that definitely harkens back to the House GOP budget, the package includes provisions for a 50 percent income disregard, which would allow recipients to make and keep more money and give them an added incentive to seek employment.

"This is something that has been very successful in other states," Kooiman said.

While many of the concepts behind the package emerged when House Republicans put together their budget proposal last winter, the overall package was announced at a press conference this morning as the product of a GOP workgroup.

House Speaker Craig **DeROCHE** (R-Nov) commissioned the workgroup to "research and review" Michigan's welfare system, specifically focusing on the Welfare-To-Work Program due to expire on Dec. 31.

Workgroup members included Kooiman, Rep. Tom **PEARCE** (R-Rockford) and Rep. Rick **SHAFFER** (R-Three Rivers).

"We need to create a shift in the way we think and respond to welfare," Kooiman said. "Welfare should be designed to empower people, to help get them back on their feet. Our system in Michigan is doing just the opposite."

Kooiman said that, after comparing Michigan's welfare system to those of other Midwestern states, it was clear that "we are doing a disservice to our residents by fostering an attitude of dependence instead of creating opportunities for success."

The legislation also:

- Expands education programs that allow welfare recipients up to six months to complete education/job skills programs or obtain a GED
- Fast-tracks literacy programs
- Allows able-bodied recipients to keep more of their earnings from work without losing benefits
- Offers tax incentives for Michigan employers that hire from the work-first program
- Requires individuals exempted from work-first to undergo evaluation for other work-related activities that could include community service, public education or volunteerism before being granted exemptions.

Across the USA

News from every state

Michigan: Lansing — Welfare recipients considered able to work could lose their cash assistance after four years, according to a proposal by state House Republicans. It would also require those receiving aid to complete a job training program or get a GED. About 8,100 people now on the welfare rolls for more than three years would get a one-year grace period before possibly losing their aid.

Day care licensed despite child porn

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Ken Kolker

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- The state allowed a day-care center to remain open for at least six months -- even issuing it a new license -- after police found child pornography on a computer at the home during a sexual-assault investigation.

Grand Rapids police said a state worker was investigating the licensed day-care center with city detectives in December 2004 when officers seized the computer from Kristopher Cross, 2642 Fuller Ave. NE. (Cross spells his name Kristopher on his driver's license and voter registration, though it appears as Khristopher in several court records.)

Cross and his wife, Amanda Cross, were licensed to care for up to 12 children there.

The state worker was still on the case in February when a pathologist determined five images on the computer were of naked teen-aged girls, said Grand Rapids Police Sgt. Tim Williams.

"(State officials) were part of the investigation," Williams said. "They would be aware of it."

Despite the images, police were turned down by prosecutors early this year when they sought a warrant against Cross, Williams said.

A short time later, in May, the state renewed the home's license, records show.

Williams said he didn't know what the state's standards were that allowed a day-care center to remain open after the discovery of pornography.

"Possession of child pornography, whether it's for personal use or otherwise, is something you don't like around child-care workers caring for your kids," Williams said.

Police obtained a criminal warrant against Cross in late September, charging him with sexual assault, after a second victim came forward, Williams said.

The state announced on Tuesday it had suspended the day-care license.

Kristopher Cross said he and his wife voluntarily gave up the license in August, about the time the second alleged victim came forward.

This morning, Cross confirmed that he and his wife bought the Family and Friends Inc. day-care center, 3999 Alpenhorn Drive NW in Alpine Township, four months ago, about the time they were shutting down their in-home operation on Fuller.

State licensing records show the Alpine Township center is still licensed to care for up to 118 children under the previous owner, DLKS Family and Friends Inc.

Cross said he has been to the center a few times, but only on weekends to make repairs. He said he is not there when children are present.

"I don't have nothing to do with that center," he said. "That's why we bought that center, to get the problems away from our house."

The state child-care licensing investigator assigned to the case, Kathy Mulder-Sheridan, of the Department of Human Services, said she couldn't comment on the investigation.

It was Mulder who wrote a letter to Amanda and Kristopher Cross in May, informing them their license for the home on Fuller was being renewed. She referred questions to state officials in Lansing. DHS spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet refused to comment.

Kristopher Cross, 33, is charged with two counts of first-degree criminal-sexual conduct involving a 5-year-old girl. He is charged with two counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 7-year-old girl, court records showed.

He also is charged with possession of child sexually abusive material, records showed.

Cross has denied the charges. He denied having child porn on his computer. "Everybody and his brother gets porn pop-ups" from the Internet, he said today. "I don't look at child porn."

The images on the computer are not of the alleged young victims who were cared for at the home, police said.

Detectives today expected to interview two young girls who once were cared for at the Cross home, Williams said. Police said they have not identified any girls who were sexually assaulted after the investigation started.

Detective Pete Kemme began investigating Cross in December based on the complaint of the 7-year-old girl.

During the investigation, police used a search warrant to seize Cross' computer. They sent it to a Kentwood police officer who specializes in retrieving information from computers, Williams said.

Within a month, the Kentwood officer reported finding a handful of pornographic images of girls who appeared to be 14 to 17 years old, Williams said.

Detectives sent those images to Kent County Medical Examiner Stephen Cohle, who is considered an expert in determining ages in such cases. He examined the images on Feb. 23 and told police he believed they were of teen-aged girls, Williams said.

Due to a lack of evidence, Kent County prosecutors did not issue a warrant involving the 7-year-old girl, Williams said.

Prosecutors said child-porn charges also weren't filed earlier this year because police were confused about the law, believing that the children in the photographs had to be under age 16. Police began investigating again on Aug. 18, when a second alleged victim, the 5-year-old girl, came forward to report she had been sexually assaulted at the home more than two years ago, Williams said.

It wasn't until then that police realized child-porn laws involved children under age 18, said Assistant Prosecutor Helen Brinkman.

"There was a little confusion," she said.

Cross turned himself in to police on Oct. 6 after prosecutors wrote warrants charging him with sexually assaulting both girls.

Deirdre Toeller-Novak, executive director of the Children's Assessment Center, where young victims of abuse are interviewed, said she expects the state will investigate its response to the day-care center.

Toeller-Novak said parents of children from the day care have called her office, wondering if they should worry about them. One man drove to her office on Wednesday, she said.

"All of the children there were not abused," she said.

She suggested that worried parents should call the Children's Assessment Center at 336-5160 or go to its Web site: www.cac-kent.org.

Jury goes against couple; judge to decide on custody

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By John Agar
The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Once hailed as adoptive parents of the year, Beryl and Jerome Richards of Kentwood could lose parental rights to 12 adopted children as early as today.

A jury on Wednesday found them responsible for abuse and neglect, and gave a judge jurisdiction over the children. They have been in foster care since spring after allegations the couple whipped them as punishment and ignored claims of alleged sexual abuse by siblings. Kent County Family Judge Nanaruth Carpenter set a disposition hearing for today. Assistant Prosecutor Vicki Seidl will try to show that severing parental rights is in the best interest of the children.

Attorney Kevin Cronin, representing the couple, doubted they stood a chance of regaining custody. He vowed to appeal to the state Court of Appeals because of limits the judge put on the presentation of his case.

Cronin said jurors should have heard about the children's serious emotional problems, which could help explain steps the couple took to protect them. He said the couple were victims of false allegations by troubled kids.

The jury heard testimony over two weeks before reaching a decision in only two hours. At least five of six jurors had to find by a preponderance of evidence that allegations of abuse and neglect were proven. Carpenter will consider trial testimony in determining the best interests of the children.

While Cronin predicted parental rights would be terminated, he added: "Nothing's a slam dunk." Seidl, the prosecutor, and the children's attorneys, Paula Hines and Kristan Newhouse, said the jury got it right.

The children suffered abuse -- "not correction, not guidance, (but) physical, emotional abuse," Hines said.

Newhouse said: "I think the definition of what happened to these children is torture, not discipline."

Seidl said it is not a foregone conclusion, however, that the judge will sever parental rights. Some of the adopted children testified the couple whipped them -- up to 75 "licks" -- with a belt, extension cord and wooden spoon, and withheld food as punishment. They said the couple ignored claims of sexual assault by older siblings.

No criminal charges have been filed for the alleged sexual assaults, but an investigation is under way.

In her closing argument, Seidl said corporal punishment wasn't on trial.

"They have a right to use reasonable discipline, reasonable force, I have no disagreement with that whatsoever. ... Is it reasonable to leave scars on children?"

The Richardses left court without comment.

Doctor's hearing in March

FENTON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Shantell M. Kirkendoll

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FENTON - A Fenton chiropractor will face a state disciplinary hearing starting March 13 for charges that he inappropriately touched two teenage patients.

Meanwhile, Dr. Robert Moore quickly returned to his practice after the suspension of his license was overturned Nov. 7.

Moore's chiropractic license was suspended in September, and he endured a three-day hearing in November.

"Dr. Moore was back at work the same day the suspension was lifted," said attorney Lisa Kirsch Satawa of Southfield. "He had patients who would not be seen by the stand-in doctor."

He lost no office staff, Satawa said, and she was not aware of any reduction in Moore's patients.

To make sure the community was aware he was back in business, he has sent mailings saying: "Dr. Moore is back. Tell everyone you know."

Moore's ability to continue treating his patients rests on next year's hearing.

He could permanently lose his license if the state Department of Community

Health proves he was negligent when treating the girls, who were patients and employees, for uneven breasts.

Moore has denied touching the girls sexually.

State records indicate Moore pushed on a 16-year-old girl's cleavage with his fingers for 10 minutes during one of several adjustments in 2004 at his home and after office hours.

The first complaint was made in 2003 by another teen, a 16-year-old former file clerk who said she underwent "uncomfortable" exams and manipulations of her ribs and collarbone by Moore.

An administrative law judge blasted the Department of Community Health for waiting more than a year to act and found no grounds for the emergency suspension.

"What Dr. Moore is really accused of is a crime. ... Dr. Moore is under investigation for that crime. He has not been convicted. He has not even been charged. ... Punishing Dr. Moore at this stage is premature," Judge Erick Williams wrote in a 14-page decision.

The Genesee County prosecutor's office is considering filing criminal sexual abuse charges.

During an interview with The Flint Journal on Wednesday, Satawa suggested that the state health department may have issued the license suspension to boost the criminal case.

"It is not uncommon to use a civil proceeding to manipulate the flow of information ... and create a where-there's-smoke-there's-fire impression in the community," she said.

QUICK TAKE

Hearing scheduled

A disciplinary

hearing for a

chiropractor

accused of

massaging the

breasts of female

patients has been

set for March 13.

It's the earliest the

hearing could be

scheduled because

of a crowded trial

schedule.

More safety, better technology

Kelly Nankervis, Midland Daily News 11/30/2005

Testifying in a court case is stressful and difficult for victims, especially children, but a courtroom renovation in the Midland County Probate Court already has made the process easier and improved safety.

The renovation is complete with a new bench, wheelchair-accessible witness stand and counsel tables, sound system, video system and plasma TV, as well as room in the gallery for wheelchairs. It rearranges the setting in the courtroom as well as the way work is done, and was completed about one month ago.

"The cool part is when children are testifying from chambers," said Jerome M.P. Kole, trial court administrator. For an open house Tuesday afternoon, a Raggedy Ann doll was seated in a big red cushy chair in front of a camera and TV in Judge Dorene Allen's chambers, right where child victims will sit to testify. The child only can see the judge, or the attorney asking questions.

In the courtroom, a fluffy white bear occupied Allen's seat at the bench, playing judge for the in-chambers camera. The plasma TV in the courtroom showed the Raggedy Ann doll.

Without the camera system, children who were victimized sat just feet away from the accused perpetrators while testifying.

"It created massive issues as far as revictimizing victims," Allen said, adding the first child who testified using the system did so potently, simply and specifically. The child's mother, accused in the case, sat and listened, commenting during testimony, but the system kept her comments from reaching and upsetting the child.

The system can be patched through to the district court so children can testify for cases without being in those courtrooms.

Kole explained the system can be used for hearings involving youth at the Midland County Juvenile Care System and Midland County Jail inmates without requiring the youth or inmate to be brought to the courtroom. There is a phone system enabling Allen

to conduct recorded hearings with prison inmates, also making it unnecessary for inmates to be escorted from prisons to the courthouse, Allen said.

The phone system will be hearing impaired certified, she added, explaining that's important for a court that deals with people with disabilities.

Other high points of the system include digitally recording hearings stored on compact discs; the rapid production of transcripts; and the display of DVDs, videos or computer presentations in the courtroom.

The remodel rearranged the courtroom, placing the bench near the door leading from Allen's chambers, and has a divider between the bench and the witness stand. That means Allen no longer will walk past the gallery and counsel tables in the courtroom to reach the bench, making the short walk safer for her.

"It's made a huge difference in people coming in ... and feeling safe," Allen said.

December 1, 2005

Family to family

Program changing the face of foster care

By MARTA HEPLER DRAHOS

Record-Eagle staff writer

Kathie Walter, shown with three of her five children, from left, Patrick Walter, 14, Jaclyn Barnes, 20, and Briana Walter, 16, along with her husband Glenn, not pictured, have welcomed 13 children into their Suttons Bay home in the past four years. TRAVERSE CITY - When her four children were temporarily removed from her care in May so she could work on an alcohol addiction problem, Dawn (her last name is being withheld to protect her identity) didn't have to wonder where they were or who they were with.

Instead, she met Kathie and Glenn Walter, the foster parents who would help care for the children for the next five months, thanks to a new program that is changing the face of foster care in northern Michigan.

Based on neighborhood and family-centered principles, the Family to Family program aims to reduce the number of children in foster care by giving families the help they need to safely care for their children in their homes. Siblings are kept together, and children who must be removed from their families in emergency situations are placed with caring and capable relatives or, failing that, with other families within the children's own communities and schools.

"If kids have a connection, someone who knows them, who knew them when they were little, they will do better," said Mike Pavlov, Family to Family coordinator for the Department of Human Services' Region 2 Service Center, which covers 22 counties in northern Michigan. Before, Pavlov said social workers often "rescued" children from their homes and placed them in foster care without first finding out if local relatives were able to care for them. Now the goal is to encourage family foster care by giving relatives the structures and supports they need, including licensing them as foster parents.

While traditionally decisions regarding care have been made between social workers and their supervisors, the new program extends the decision-making process to parents, relatives and others in the community, such as school social workers, child advocacy attorneys, child placement agency workers and sometimes even the children.

Team decision meetings, or TDMs, are held at churches, hospitals, child placement agencies and even jails to involve as many key people as possible.

"Our policy has always been making the best decision for children," Pavlov said. "We hire workers to be decisive. Now we're kind of ratcheting backwards half a step and taking a little more time to make the best decision."

Cathy Walter, 44, said the program makes it possible for foster care parents and biological parents to meet and communicate openly about the children and their needs.

"I was able to ask (Dawn) things like, 'Do you want to keep (your daughter) at her same school or going to another? What do the kids like, what do they not like?'" she said. "She has the opportunity to say, 'Don't give my kids SpaghettiOs because they really break out when they eat them.' It's a big opener for communication for the biological family and the foster."

Knowing that both sets of parents are working together also can prevent children from feeling

divided in their loyalties, said Pat Sparks, a facilitator for the Family to Family Program.

"When the kids see their parents getting along with their foster parents, it takes a lot of that strain away," she said.

For her part, Dawn, 35, said meeting Walter and seeing that her kids were all right made it easier to concentrate on her treatment.

"I didn't have to wonder how they were treated or where they were, what it was like," she said.

"When you don't know where they're at, your mind can wander and think the worst. Knowing (Walter) from the start, I got to see that it wasn't so bad."

Over time, the women's relationship has blossomed into friendship. Dawn and her children, who returned home in September, sometimes attend church with the Walters, who have five children. When Dawn has conflicts with her work and college schedules, Walter often steps in to provide transportation or baby-sitting services.

When Dawn was in treatment, Walter came to family day to learn more about alcoholism.

"I'm sure it's hard for somebody who doesn't know anything about alcoholism to understand,"

Dawn said "From their perspective if you're drinking and you have kids, you must be a bad parent, and that wasn't the case. Both my parents were alcoholic, and I never knew any different.

"I don't know other families but with Cathy, I was able to feel comfortable around her and share some of the things I'd been through and the kids had been through."

Sparks said open communication between foster and biological families can humanize the issues of poverty and addiction that are often at the root of emergency child placements. It isn't unusual for foster parents to become mentors to the parents of kids they care for, she added.

Now in place in 16 counties, the Family to Family program was implemented in northern Michigan in 2004 with technical assistance from the private Baltimore-based Annie E. Casey Foundation, which works to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families. Eventually, the model will be adopted by the rest of the state which, like others, has fallen short of federal guidelines for foster care, Pavlov said.

The program designed in 1992 has been field tested or adopted by communities in a dozen states since. Michigan's is one of the first rural models in the country, Pavlov said.

While statistics don't tell the whole story, Pavlov is encouraged by the reductions in foster care since the program was implemented. The Region 2 Service Center had 197 children in foster care in October 2005 compared to 243 in October 2004, he said.

"I can see in front of me the difference in how we're able to interact with the families," added Sparks. "It's significant."

State's economy 'not in a tailspin'

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Paul Overeiner

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Jackson's unemployment rate fell by nearly a full percentage point in October to 5.2 percent, matching the average for the 2001 calendar year.

But that may be as good as it gets, at least for a while.

Dana Johnson, chief economist for Comerica Bank, said the restructuring of Michigan's automotive industry likely will keep job creation in most of the state's labor markets flat, at least through the end of 2006.

General Motors recently announced it will cut 30,000 jobs and economic experts expect more to come.

Grim news, perhaps, but it could be worse, Johnson said.

"The sunshine is Michigan's economy is not in a tailspin," Johnson said.

Michigan benefits from strong economic conditions outside the state and from less reliance on the automotive sector to create jobs within.

"I think the state has made some progress in becoming more diversified," Johnson said.

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth analysts say Jackson gained about 400 jobs between September and October, mainly a seasonal gain in public school employment.

Health and retail sectors added about 100 jobs to the total.

"I think we'll see job gains in sectors like health care and business and professional services," Johnson said.

But manufacturing is another matter.

Jackson lost 100 manufacturing jobs between September and October and more are coming.

TRW Automotive will eliminate 300 to 400 jobs here by June.

Johnson said Ford and major suppliers like Delphi are expected to announce more job cuts around the first of the year.

"The job losses in the manufacturing sector understate the loss of income in the state," Johnson said.

Even automotive workers who do not lose their jobs are facing wage reductions and zero bonuses, Johnson said.

"Everybody tied to that sector is in a pretty cautious spending mode," Johnson said.

And some of the state's newest workers may not be willing to wait for better times to return.

Johnson said he recently met with a group of University of Michigan business students and nearly every one said they would seek their fortunes outside the state once they graduated.

If that sentiment is widespread, the state will lose the youthful talent it needs to regain economic health.

"It kind of feeds on itself," Johnson said.

District gets grant to help older workers

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Matt Bach

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The Flint School District has received a \$414,000 grant to provide job training to low-income adults age 55 and older.

The district was one of 108 public and nonprofit organizations in 23 states and the District of Columbia to get a grant from the Senior Service American Inc., a Washington, D.C., nonprofit organization.

The funding is part of a \$51-million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to SSAI to administer the program. Program participants are to contribute meaningful community service and get valuable on-the-job experience working in government and nonprofit organizations. They receive minimum wage for part-time work.

Flint is the only K-12 public school district in the nation that sponsors an older workers job training program, said John McGarry, director of the Flint Senior AIDES program.

-

GM/UAW gift kicks off food bank drive

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Kristin Longley

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FLINT - Thanks in part to a \$100,000 donation, the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is off and running toward its holiday campaign goal of \$500,000.

Food bank President Bill Kerr was in tears on Wednesday as he accepted the check from Mark Hawkins, shop chairman at General Motors Flint Truck Assembly and plant manager Jim Glynn. "To think all those folks at the truck plant can do that with times like these - it's amazing to me," Kerr said. "This just chokes me up."

Despite numerous obstacles faced by the food bank, including supplies diverted south after Hurricane Katrina struck and the financial woes of Delphi and General Motors, spirits and emotions were high at the campaign kick-off, held Wednesday at the food bank warehouse. Citizen's Bank also donated \$5,000 and Community President Mark Hunt announced the bank's \$50,000 goal, which is higher than last year's due to increased need.

U.S. Rep. Dale E. Kildee, D-Flint, offered support for everything the food bank does for the community, he said.

"They have a great love for what they do and a great efficiency," he said. "Dollar for dollar, they can get food to the people who need it."

Those people in need include the children at the Whaley's Children's Center of Flint, a group of homes designed to prepare abused and abandoned children for foster care. The food bank supplies the organization's five homes, which can hold more than 50 children.

"Our homes are full at all times," said Denise Johnson, a representative with the center. "This campaign is extremely important to us and all our kids."

Many of the food bank's agencies were at the kick-off to demonstrate how the annual campaign benefits their patrons. To thank them, the food bank credited each agency with 200 pounds of food.

"Without the food bank, we wouldn't be here," said Bob Stoutenburg, of the food pantry at Flint's St. Agnes Catholic Church. "We depend on this (campaign)."

Any amount helps, Kerr said. On Friday, envelopes will be distributed in the Flint Journal for mail-in donations.

"Flint Journal readers are amazing," said Editor Paul Keep, adding the envelopes have raised more than \$500,000 over the years for the food bank. "The need here is negative, but the response is positive."

Church helps homeless

Members get much out of program themselves

By Robin Iori, Press & Guide Newspapers

PUBLISHED: November 30, 2005

DEARBORN - Smiles were abundant. A feeling of gratitude was certainly evident, and a sense of brotherhood also seemed to be felt by most.

This was the first night for those staying at the First United Methodist Church in Dearborn as it opened its doors to homeless folks last week — folks from the Cass Community Center in Detroit.

About 45 men, 15 women and five children enjoyed the hospitality of the parishioners of First Methodist this year for Thanksgiving week through the Interfaith Rotating Shelter program.

They received blankets and boots and donated luggage. They ate breakfast and dinner at the church and slept there. The daytime was spent looking for work or an apartment.

On Monday, Nov. 21, more than 60 people were served dinner in the church's basement by Boy Scout Troop 1104, nearly 90 strong and eager to cook, serve and clean up afterward. Church member Cathy Duling was kitchen manager for the week and Bruce Heilbrun was responsible for purchasing the food and making up the menus for 700 individual meals.

"I know our homeless friends really appreciate this week, but what it does for us as a church is wonderful as well," said Heilbrun. "We get so much out of it ourselves."

Gregory, one of the homeless men, said he had been in the program for only about eight or nine days, but he was already very appreciative of the services he was receiving.

"I give thanks to God that so many people have been so nice to me," he said. "I have some money saved up for a security deposit for an apartment. Now, I just have to find an apartment and go job hunting again."

Gregory had already received a piece of luggage to carry his clothes in. He noted it was so much nicer than using a black, plastic garbage bag.

Patricia Higgs lost her day care provider and then lost her job. She and her four children, Jocelyn, Joshua, Ariele and Daniel were enjoying their meals and the friendship of the church members.

Jocelyn is in third grade at Durfee Elementary in Detroit. She catches the bus from the Cass shelter every morning. Joshua, who has Down's syndrome, is enrolled in a special education class, and the other two children are pre-school age.

"Daniel's birthday was Saturday. He turned two," said Higgs. "We couldn't really have a birthday party for him, but it's nice we have this week of good food and help."

Higgs is also able to see her mother who lives in Detroit. The young children spend time with their grandmother during the day while Higgs looks for a job.

The Interfaith Rotating Shelter Program includes a number of denominations through Southeast Michigan. They take turns sheltering and feeding the homeless who are selected through the Cass Community Social Service program.

Several First Methodist Church families have made the Thanksgiving Day meal a church event for a few years now, sharing their day and their friendship with those who are less fortunate.

City plans classes to teach residents how to weatherize their homes

Thursday, December 1, 2005

By Patti Brandt
Bay CityTimes Writer

Bay City residents can learn how to save a few bucks on their heating, electricity and water bills - on the city's dime.

A weatherization class that will teach residents how to plastic-seal and weather-strip windows and doors and how to use a caulk gun will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Bay City Hall, 301 Washington Ave.

Two additional classes will be scheduled for January, but times and dates have not been set.

The class is free and attendees will receive one weatherization kit per household, with each kit containing tubes of caulk and caulk guns, a low-flow shower head, a refrigerator thermometer, a brush to clean dust off the grating on the back of a refrigerator, a night light, a plastic window kit, a carbon monoxide detector and energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs.

The class, which takes about one hour, is limited to Bay City residents and only 25 people may attend each class. Classes are expected to fill up fast and residents should call the city's community development department at 984-8156 to reserve a spot.

"The whole purpose is to give homeowners the initiative to implement conservation measures in their own homes," said Debbie Kiesel, Bay City's redevelopment coordinator.

"We're going to train them to do some of their own conservation measures to save energy in their homes," she said.

The class is presented by the Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency, which normally charges residents \$300 for the class.

The city is picking up the \$6,200 tab for the program.

- Patti Brandt covers Bay City, Auburn, Essexville and Pinconning for The Times. She can be reached at 894-9673 or by e-mail at pbrandt@bc-times.com.

County saves last flu shots for kids

Web-posted Dec 1, 2005

By CHARLES CRUMM
Of The Oakland Press

If you're still planning to get a flu shot, you'll have to see your doctor instead of going to the county Health Division. What little vaccine remains at the Health Division's three locations - 250 doses at each - is earmarked for children 8 years old and younger. "As of today, we're done," Health Division Manager George Miller said Wednesday of vaccinations for people older than 8. Miller said the Health Division has dispensed 41,000 vaccines since they became available at the end of October - about the normal amount dispensed each year.

But unlike last year, when a nationwide shortage stretched out supplies, the county is exhausting its supply this year by about 15 days earlier than anticipated.

Last year, vaccines were initially limited to people defined as high risk - the elderly and children. This year, the vaccines were open to everyone as long as supplies lasted.

"We're pretty confident the highrisk population that needed it, got it," Miller said.

The county received its vaccines this year from manufacturer Aventis Pasteur.

Doctors' offices should be receiving supplies from manufacturer Chiron in early December, according to the health division.

In the meantime, children ages 6 months to 8 years can still get flu shots while supplies last at the health division's three locations at 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Building 36 East in the county complex in Pontiac; at 27725 Greenfield Road in Southfield; and at 1010 E. West Maple Road in Walled Lake.

Hours are noon-8 p.m. Mondays and 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays.

The shots cost \$7, and photo identification and insurance cards are required. Medicaid is also accepted.

The shots protect against types A-New Caledonia, A-New York and B-Jiangsu flu.

The health division discourages flu vaccines for people who are running a fever, are allergic to eggs or flu vaccine, have had a serious reaction to flu vaccine in the past or have previously developed Guillain-Barre syndrome in the past within six weeks of receiving a flu shot.

Do away with Part D

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Thursday, December 01, 2005

JOURNAL READER

Rescind the Medicare Part D plan and institute a drug program as part of the present medical programs. We need to get the insurance companies out of this new drug coverage for seniors program. It is a jumble of mass confusion and in its present form is not very feasible.

Layton Galloway
Flint

Editorials

Detroit Free Press

Detroit needs to work better with community groups

December 1, 2005

The unfortunate closing today of Wellness House, a nonprofit that provided food and housing for HIV patients for 20 years, shows why the City of Detroit needs to improve relations with the community-based groups that can best respond to Detroit's AIDS epidemic.

The city, which supplied most of Wellness House's \$700,000 annual budget through federal grants, yanked the agency's funding and gave some of the money to a nonprofit that hadn't even requested it. The Department of Health and Wellness Promotion cited mismanagement at Wellness House, although audits showed the program generally was well managed.

The real reason for the funding shift appears to be petty politics and retaliation for the agency making a direct appeal to the Detroit City Council. That resulted in an auditor general finding that the health department did not follow normal procedures when it moved funding from Wellness House to another agency.

Wellness House has served up to 3,000 poor people with monthly food boxes or vouchers in metro Detroit and housed 24 people a year.

"There's no one out there that's done what we've done," said Executive Director Rob Fetzer.

The real losers in this political football game are the low-income people living with HIV who most need the help. Community-based nonprofits are especially effective because they employ people who have gone through similar experiences as the populations they serve, including HIV infection and drug addiction. They view their work as a mission, and clients trust them more than government agencies.

But in Detroit, such nonprofit agencies are getting cut while the city seeks more of the federal aid for its own programs.

Community-based nonprofits such as Wellness House remain effective ways to serve people with HIV and reduce transmission risks. Weakening them will only make the epidemic worse.

Detroit Free Press

December 1, 2005

Editorials

World AIDS Day

U.S. must cut strings on funding, work globally to fight the disease

Nearly three years after President George W. Bush made a stunning \$15-billion commitment to the fight against global AIDS, progress has not kept pace with the pandemic. The United States doesn't shoulder the blame alone, but America's leadership has not been strong or broad enough. By today, World AIDS Day 2005, the World Health Organization was supposed to be treating 3 million infected people. That goal is unmet, and AIDS prevention services have yet to reach 25% of those in need of them, according to the Global AIDS Alliance. Meantime, 40 million people live with HIV/AIDS, 3 million died from it last year and 4.9 million new cases were diagnosed. The United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates prevention and treatment will cost \$18 billion next year, but contributions are not keeping pace with the need.

Part of the problem is Bush. While his commitment was bold, it was restricted. While boosting U.S. support, Bush funnels much of it to his own AIDS-fighting agency, which devotes 60% of the prevention dollars to abstinence education. Young girls sold into marriage for a few dollars to feed and shelter their families lack the liberty to "just say no."

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria takes a more comprehensive approach, and leverages all nations' money into treatment and education. Congress wisely diverts some money from the Bush plan to the Global Fund, but the \$450-million contribution falls \$100 million short of what the United States should chip in this year, and \$250 million short of next year's goal.

Worse, Bush put new restrictions on AIDS funding. Family-planning agencies may be the only places women can learn to protect themselves from this deadly disease, but Bush forbids any group that takes U.S. money from using other resources to talk about abortion, even to make it safer where it is legal. He recently reneged on a 2-year-old promise to keep AIDS funds free of this global gag rule. That eliminates too many health resources.

AIDS runs too rampant to hamstring the fight because of U.S. abortion politics. The United States needs to lift its restrictions and feed the global coffers that can best wage this lifesaving battle. The more that U.S. dollars feed the Global Fund, the more other countries' money will follow. That would give the world a fighting chance to at least slow the spread of AIDS.

Awareness and information

The Michigan Department of Community Health is holding events around the state today to help raise awareness of the grim statistics -- such as the fact that a quarter of the 1 million Americans living with the disease don't even know it -- and what to do about the numbers.

Educating the public is our first step in preventing disease," MDCH director Janet Olszewski said in a statement.

Today's Detroit event will run 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Cadillac Place Exhibit Hall, 3056 W. Grand Blvd., in the New Center area. You can go there for

testing, screening, information or just the entertainment that also will be provided.

For more information, call the MDCH Division of Health, Wellness and Disease Control at 517-241-5900, or the Michigan AIDS Hotline at 800-872-2427. Or go online at

www.freep.com/worldaidsday.

Published December 1, 2005

Spoof paper proceeds to buy shoes for needy kids Old Newsboys' fun edition aims to raise \$135K

By Kevin Grasha
Lansing State Journal

On street corners and at factory gates across the city Friday, a small army of volunteers will be hawking copies of the "Lansing Spoof Journal."

Sales of the fun edition raise money for Old Newsboys Association of Greater Lansing to buy shoes and boots for thousands of needy children every year.

Current and former employees of the State Journal write, edit and print the newspaper, a tradition that began in the 1920s.

"Everybody ought to be a target - including ourselves," said Mark Nixon, the State Journal's editorial page editor, who has been contributing to the rag since 1973.

Articles in this year's edition include ones:

- Explaining (well, sort of) columnist John Schneider's "on assignment" whereabouts.
- Advocating that the Grand River be drained and paved.
- Revealing new recommendations from the committee looking into whatever the heck happened in the spring on the streets of East Lansing.

This year's goal is to raise \$135,000, said Bruce Holliday, a Lansing police detective who is serving this year as the organization's president.

About \$127,000 was raised last year through sales of the paper.

Needy children who live within 25 miles of the Capitol are eligible to seek help from Old Newsboys.

Parents can apply at their child's school. They receive vouchers they can redeem for footwear at approved retailers.

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or kgrasha@lsj.com.
How to get one

- A small army of volunteers will be out Friday in Lansing and surrounding towns hawking issues of the 82nd edition of the Old Newsboys' spoof newspaper - the "Lansing Spoof Journal."

- Look for the orange bags.

- Any size donation is welcome.

- Proceeds go to buying footwear for needy children in the Lansing area.

- Donations also can be made online with a credit card at www.oldnewsboy.org, or by mailing a check or money order to: Old Newsboys, P.O. Box 14058, Lansing, 48901.

Charities busy helping those less fortunate

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Teresa Taylor Williams
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

'Tis the season for giving, and West Michigan has plenty of places that are in need of food, gifts and financial donations.

The need is being felt throughout the area with many human service agencies receiving calls for help this holiday season.

But at Catholic Social Services, 1095 Third, folks aren't asking for Christmas "wish list" items. Instead, they're seeking basic necessities.

"We've had more requests for food and basic needs such as diapers, boots and coats right now than this same time last year," said Maureen Fitzgerald Penn, marketing and development director for Catholic Social Services. "A number of new calls are from people newly unemployed. This is new to them, and it's not an easy thing to ask for help.

"Many of these families are also the working poor who are struggling to make ends meet. Gifts can strap the family, and we don't want to see them not pay the electric bill in order to provide Christmas for the kids."

She added that roughly 100 families per month use the baby pantry, which opened last spring and provides for infants and children up to age 5. Items needed include cribs, high chairs, diapers and wipes.

CSS is asking the community's help to stock its Santa's Workshop, which will be used to provide a Christmas gift to the 500 children served at the agency. Other needed items are food for food baskets, and gift cards for food and gasoline.

For two decades, Toys for Tots has provided thousands of toys to children in West Michigan. There are more than 120 drop-off locations, and all toys collected in the Muskegon area are given to children who reside here, according to Margaret Jandt, Muskegon area coordinator for Muskegon Area Toys for Tots. Toys for Tots items are forwarded to Salvation Army, Love Inc., Mission for Area People and various churches, neighborhood associations and food pantries.

Jandt said the organization volunteers "desperately need" new, unwrapped toys for infants and toddlers and items for teenagers such as handheld games, balls, makeup kits and jewelry.

"We'd also like to thank the community for the past support of Toys for Tots," she said. "Last year we gave out more than 16,000 toys."

The 69th annual Old Newsie newspaper sale will be Saturday, with members selling the "Goodfellows Extra" on street corners for a donation. The Goodfellows organization uses the proceeds from the newspaper sale to buy toys and clothes for children ages 5-11 in Muskegon County as part of its quest to "let no child be forgotten."

The 2005 sale goal is to raise enough money to buy presents for 3,000 children. Members deliver gifts to area schools for parents to pick up and have in time for Christmas.

Food for its pantry and holiday baskets is at the top of the list at the Salvation Army, 1221 Shonard.

"We're low on food this year," said Major Max Grindle, commanding officer with the Salvation Army of Muskegon. "Some food drives that have been done for us in the past aren't coming through this year, so this would help us with the food baskets."

The organization has been registering folks for its annual toy giveaway the last six weeks. Last week, the organization delivered 2,060 Thanksgiving dinners to the needy, and last Christmas served 1,840 people with food baskets and toys.

As of Wednesday, the Salvation Army had 1,750 people call for help this Christmas, and the registration deadline is Friday. The giveaway will be Dec. 19-23, with parents shopping for children by appointment only at the former Plumb's store located at the corner of Wood Street and Laketon Avenue.

The staff at Family Services Workforce Development Center, 1516 Peck, are asking the community to donate unwrapped toys for children and teens to benefit children of clients in the Michigan Works program.

Volunteer Muskegon's Family to Family program allows families and groups from churches or businesses to adopt a needy family and provide dinner and gifts for them for Christmas. Donors can choose to remain anonymous or deliver their gifts in person.

Every Woman's Place, 1221 W. Laketon, will continue to collect new and unwrapped donations of clothing, toys and gifts for teenagers to give to needy families.

The staff at Child Haven, the Muskegon County Department of Human Services' shelter for abused and neglected children, is seeking financial donations to meet a challenge issued by the Youth Advisory Council of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County. If the facility raises \$1,000 for its endowment fund, the student advisory board will give it \$1,500 to use this Christmas for the children residing there.

The Muskegon Rescue Mission will hold its annual Children's Christmas Celebration for those who stayed there during 2005 and those currently residing at the women's and children's shelter at 1691 Peck. The party is 2:30-5 p.m. Dec. 17 in the Muskegon High School cafeteria.

Other Rescue Mission events include the annual Used Toy Giveaway 10 a.m.-noon Dec. 20-21 in the men's shelter, 400 W. Laketon. Also at the men's shelter, the food pantry will offer special holiday foods 10:30 a.m. Dec. 19 and 22, and recipients are asked to sign up prior to that morning. Both shelters are collecting new and used toys, along with gifts for the adult shelter residents.

Mission for Area People will again host its annual toy giveaway 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Dec. 20-22 at Fire Escape Cafe, 2731 Peck. Walk-ins will not be served, so individuals must register by Friday. Participants will be given an appointment date and time, and must bring photo identification for each person in the home. Toys will be given for children and teens.

Love Inc., 2525 Hall, is offering assistance with toys for children and teens. Individuals should bring a photo identification and Social Security cards for each member of the household at the time of gift pick up. The giveaway is Dec. 20-22.

Officials with Christian Community Center, 540 E. Hackley, are asking families in need of food baskets and toys for children and teens to register before Dec. 16. Individuals must bring a photo identification and Social Security cards for all members of the household at the time of their gift pick up, which will be Dec. 21.

Coat drive spreads warmth

Thursday, December 01, 2005

By Jean Gallup
The Grand Rapids Press

WAYLAND -- A coat and winter-wear drive, an idea originated by a Wayland Union High School student, is under way and continues until Dec. 9. The annual appeal is sponsored by the student council.

Initiated by student Zach Booms four years ago, the first student council effort resulted in 300 coats collected, and it has brought in about 300 each year since.

Wayland Senior Paul Golm has been drive chairman the past two years.

"I can say this year's drive has been more organized and gone more smoothly because I have more people on the committee working with me," he said.

He stressed that any winter wear, including coats, mittens, gloves, hats and scarves, is welcome. The first two years, the students distributed coats out of the school's community education building and hauled the rest to Booms' garage.

Last year, the Salvation Army picked them up, a more practical solution to the distribution problem. If more winter wear is donated after the Salvation Army pickup this year, it will be taken to Project Hope's Annetta Jansen Ministry in Dorr, the same as last year.

Next year's drive will be run by one of the underclassman who worked on the committee this year, Golm said.

"I'll make sure they know what to do so next year one of them will be the chair," he said.

If the drives brings in another 300 coats, that means at least 1,000 people have benefited from an idea initiated and carried out by the students.

HARTLAND TOWNSHIP

Warm N' Cozy bazaar is Sunday

The Hartland Women's Club is sponsoring its 25th annual Warm N' Cozy bazaar from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Hartland Educational Service Center. The bazaar is the main fund-raiser for the nonprofit service club, which supports local charities and educational programs. The Hartland Educational Service Support Center is at 9525 Highland Road. Free shuttle service is available from the Fire Rock Entertainment Center, on Old U.S. 23, just south of M-59. General admission is \$2. For information, call (810) 632-5481.

CANTON TOWNSHIP

Wal-Mart donates funds for kids

The township's Wal-Mart store gave \$4,000 Wednesday to the township's Public Safety Department and the Canton Community Foundation: \$2,000 to Fire Chief Michael Rorabacher; and \$1,000 each to Public Safety Director John Santomauro and foundation President Joan Noricks. The foundation will use the money to buy 24 bicycles, to be donated to the Canton Goodfellows' annual "No Canton Child Without a Christmas" program for needy youngsters.

Gratiot County

Agency renamed

By LINDA GITTLEMAN
Gratiot Managing Editor

What's in a name?

The Michigan department formerly known as the Department of Social Services and then, in 1995, called the Family Independence Agency has again undergone a name change.

Now, it's called the Department of Human Services.

Renamed in March, the "department's name change was made to reflect the broadened role to its clients in the context of new goals identified by the Granholm administration," said DHS spokeswoman Karen Stock.

The state can't afford to change the signs, however, although it could readily and inexpensively change just about everything else, including letterheads, via computers.

Signs are more expensive, said Clinton and Gratiot County DHS Director Jan Baszler. For just the Gratiot County offices, Baszler said she received estimates of about \$2,500 for the signage needed in Ithaca.

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FIA

(Continued from Page 1A)

There are more than 100 offices around the state, according to a DHS press release.

Baszler said it's her understanding that no state dollars would be committed to changing the signs, even though the name's been changed. Money for that, it was hoped, would come from donations, fundraisers or community grants. But since her boards have been so helpful in numerous other fundraisers - for example, raising money for children's school clothes - "I haven't asked them (for help.)"

So, while the letters go out with the DHS logo, and the phone is answered with the new DHS name, a cardboard sign sits near one of the windows, she said.

"I don't know what the

future holds," she said. "I haven't been given a directive."

Was a name change that needed?

State Sen. Mike Goschka, R-Brant, said he wouldn't have made the change, although he understands that it's the governor's right to do so.

"I think every governor takes some programs and renames them to leave their own imprint," he said.

"I think the Family Independence Agency has a positive ring," he said. "It communicates to me that it's not just a handout. The Department of Human Services however, is better than the Department of Social Services."

He also took exception to the claim that department has significantly changed.

"It's essentially the same department," he said.

But the name change was more than just a whim of the governor, Baszler said.

People looking for the department in the phone book or those calling from out of state were not thinking of "Family Independence Agency," she said. "It wasn't easy for people to find."

Some may even have been looking for something similar to the department's first name when it was created in 1939 - the State Welfare Department.